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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 1 May 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly and has, with reference to the briefing given by the United Nations Secretariat on the Human Rights Council on 19 April 2006, the honour to communicate a request for circulation of the aide-memoire containing commitments and pledges of the Republic of Slovenia (see annex) as a document of the General Assembly.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 1 May 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire

Candidature of Slovenia for the Human Rights Council: voluntary pledges and commitments (based in resolution 60/251)

The Republic of Slovenia's very existence is rooted in the popular strive for democracy and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Slovenia has continuously strived, as a matter of policy, to contribute constructively and progressively to the universal promotion and protection of human rights.

Human rights provisions represent one third of all provisions of the Slovenian Constitution. Further, the chapter of the Slovenian Constitution entitled "Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" is placed as chapter 2, directly after the General Provisions of the Constitution. Human rights also constitute one of the key pillars of Slovenia's foreign policy.

In its endeavours to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide, Slovenia has decided to take its commitment one step further and put forward its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006, during the sixtieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Full support for and cooperation with the Human Rights Council

Slovenia has strongly supported the idea of a new Human Rights Council since it has first been suggested, has actively participated in its creation and welcomed the establishment of the Human Rights Council, including its innovative features, such as universal scrutiny for all.

In 2002, Slovenia issued a standing and open invitation to the mandate holders of special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. We have been and remain fully committed to cooperation with the special procedures.

Slovenia pledges:

- To support mainstreaming of human rights into all aspects of United Nations activities, including through communication between the Human Rights Council and other United Nations bodies.
- To cooperate fully with the procedures and mechanism of the Human Rights Council, including through visits of special procedures, on the basis of their own terms of reference, to reply to all letters of allegation received from them, and to invest efforts to implement the recommendations that they will have addressed to Slovenia.
- To contribute to the creation of universal periodic review.
- Not to support or use procedural means to stop the addressing of substantive issues in the Human Rights Council.

- To endeavour that the Human Rights Council provides an adequate response to human rights crises, when they occur, based on recommendations for action from United Nations human rights mechanisms, and to further endeavour that the Council provides sustainable attention of the international community in situations where human rights crises persist.

- To promote the development of human rights norms, where required and relevant, starting with the commitment to adopt the draft Convention on Enforced Disappearances and the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- To engage with others in a constructive manner for the promotion and effective implementation of universal human rights standards at all levels.

Reaffirming support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, other United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations — promoting a human rights approach

Slovenia used to and will continue to support the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Slovenia supported the doubling of the Office's regular budget financing in the course of the next five years so as to enable it to strengthen its work by assisting States in their implementation of human rights norms and standards.

Slovenia pledges:

- To increase its voluntary contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as soon as possible.

- To continue to provide, to the best of its abilities, voluntary contributions to the rest of the United Nations human rights system.

- To promote a human rights-based approach in its support to United Nations activities and in its engagement in the governmental bodies of UNICEF, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO and FAO, as well as IOM and ILO, and within regional organizations, such as the Council of Europe and OSCE.

International human rights instruments and submission of periodic reports — implementation at the national level

Slovenia remains committed to the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, norms and standards emanating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments in the field of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law.

Slovenia succeeded or ratified major international instruments in the field of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law, including:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol

Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols

Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

The Additional Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Convention on the Status of Refugees and its Protocol.

Slovenia has no reservations to any of these treaties.

Slovenia also succeeded to or ratified 75 ILO conventions, including all eight core ILO conventions.

According to the Slovenian Constitution, these international legal instruments are directly applicable in the Slovenian legal order.

Slovenia accepted being subject to all communication procedures of the United Nations human rights treaties it has ratified.

Slovenia regularly submits periodic reports required by the human rights treaties and take steps to publicize and follow up within Slovenia on treaty bodies' concluding observations and recommendations.

Slovenia has an active and independent national human rights institution, the Human Rights Ombudsman, providing independent assessment of the national implementation of human rights obligations and standards. The Ombudsman's annual report on the human rights situation in Slovenia is a public document, also available in English (www.varuh-rs.si). His last report was made available through official channels to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights immediately after its publication in July 2005, for the use of the treaty bodies and other interested mechanisms.

Slovenia pursues regular dialogue with civil society on human rights issues in its foreign policy. Slovenia further supports the inclusion of a strong, free and independent civil society voice in the efforts aimed at improvement of the human rights situation nationally, regionally and internationally. We will continue to promote an inclusive approach with regard to the work of the Council.

Slovenia pledges:

- To ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in 2006.
- To sign the Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions in 2006 and to undertake the necessary domestic procedures for early ratification.

Slovenia has and pledges to continue to actively demonstrate its support for the drafting of an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic,

Social and Cultural Rights to provide a communication procedure to the set of rights emanating from that treaty.

Slovenia pledges to continue to submit regularly periodic reports to the human rights treaty bodies and to assure follow-up, including dissemination and publication within Slovenia of the recommendations and comments made by those bodies and concrete activities aimed at their effective implementation.